



## Frequently Asked Questions COVID-19 Testing for Employers

June 13, 2020

### ***Can my employees be tested for COVID-19?***

Yes. Symptomatic or not, the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) announced on May 12 that free COVID-19 testing is available to all workers in the state. This includes workers in the government (state, county, municipal, federal, etc.), utility and construction, grocery and pharmacy, retail and wholesale and food service sectors. Free COVID-19 testing is available to workers at 28 NMDOH Public Health Offices throughout the state.

### ***Do my employees need health insurance to get tested? What if I have employees who don't have health insurance?***

All testing is free of charge to the individual and anyone can get tested, whether they are insured or not. If you have insurance, please bring your insurance card with you when you get tested.

### ***What if one of my employees tests positive for COVID-19?***

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) or NMDOH will contact the positive employee and the employer by phone and send you a letter stating that one or more of your employees tested positive for COVID-19. The NMED will require you to initiate immediate actions to prevent further exposure. These activities include ceasing operations in full or in part per NMED/NMDOH direction, testing of all employees, re-testing of all employees in 7-10 calendar days, disinfecting the worksite, and implementing an employee safety plan. The NMED is experienced in working with employers to minimize downtime of your operations.

### ***Am I required by law to have my employees tested?***

New Mexico law states that every employer must provide a place of employment that is free from recognized hazards that are likely to cause death or physical harm to their employees. The NMED administers these laws and considers proactive testing of employees a critical means of ensuring a safe workplace.

### ***What if an employee refuses to be tested?***

Employees have a responsibility to comply with their employer's health and safety standards and policies.

### ***Does the surveillance program send testing personnel to my site?***

Testing is primarily completed at NMDOH's Public Health Offices (PHO), conveniently located throughout the state. To find the testing facility closest to you, go to <https://www.nmhealth.org/location/public/>. In some cases, if there are a large number of employees who need to be tested, arrangements may be made for onsite testing. NMED is encouraging all New Mexico employers to utilize the PHO testing sites.

### ***If an employee tests positive how long will they have to quarantine?***

The New Mexico Department of Health recommends that employees who test positive self-quarantine for 7-10 days and then be retested. Employees should not return to work until they have obtained a follow-up negative test result.

### ***Do we have to test all employees on one day?***

No. Contact the NMED at [NMOSHA.COVIDTesting@state.nm.us](mailto:NMOSHA.COVIDTesting@state.nm.us) and we will work with you on available testing times and locations.

***I received a call from someone claiming to be with New Mexico OSHA regarding surveillance testing. Is this legitimate?***

NMED, in conjunction with NMDOH, is conducting COVID-19 testing around the state. Employers may be contacted by either Department with a request that employees at your establishment be tested for the virus that causes COVID-19. Testing fraud has been reported in some areas of the U.S. If you wish to verify the legitimacy of a contact from our Testing Surveillance program, email [NMOSHA.COVIDTesting@state.nm.us](mailto:NMOSHA.COVIDTesting@state.nm.us) or call 800-219-6157.

It is also important to note that COVID-19 testing in the state of New Mexico is 100% free of charge and none of our testing programs will require that you disclose your Social Security number.

***Does the employer have to pay for the employee's time during testing?***

Yes. New Mexico and federal law mandates that employees shall be authorized official time for activities related to occupational health and safety.

***How long will the employees have to wait in line for testing?***

We cannot guarantee that there will be no wait, but the NMED and the NMDOH are working together to coordinate test scheduling so that wait times are minimized to the extent possible.